

## REMARKS

This Response is submitted in response to the Office Action mailed on July 14, 2006. The Office Action requires restriction between three alleged groups of invention: Group I (Claims 16-19); Group II (Claims 25-40); and Group III (Claims 41-46). Applicants respectfully submit that this restriction requirement is improper and should be withdrawn. As such, Applicants provisionally elect Group II (Claims 25-40) with traverse.

There are two criteria for a proper requirement for restriction between patentably distinct inventions as required under MPEP §803. The inventions must be independent or distinct as claimed, and there must be a serious burden on the Examiner if restriction is not required. The Patent Office has examined the claims of this application numerous times, and, only now, has determined that these criteria are met. How could examination of the claims be a serious burden on the Examiner when the Patent Office has already performed multiple examinations of the claims? Applicants respectfully submit that there is no basis for finding a lack of restriction to be a serious burden on the Examiner when the examination of the instant claims by the Examiner has continued to this point in the prosecution without a restriction requirement. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that this restriction requirement is improper. Applicants reserve the right to file one or more divisional applications to the non-elected claims.

In addition, Applicants submit herewith a Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge deposit account 02-1818 for any fees which are due and owing.

Respectfully submitted,  
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BY 

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